

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00819 141603Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----141604Z 003491 /41
O 141130Z MAY 77
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4552

S E C R E T BAGHDAD 0819

EXDIS

FOR ATHERTON WITH SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IZ, US
SUBJECT: IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH IRAQ

REFERENCE: STATE 106253

1. REFTEL (TOSEC 040168) WAS JUST RECEIVED BY POUCH FROM KUWAIT.
2. SINCE IRAQIS DID NOT APPROVE HABIB VISIT, I ASSUME YOU DID NOT AUTHORIZE KUWAIT, MANAMA, ABU DHABI, DOHA AND MUSCAT TO MAKE APPROACH CONTAINED REFTEL. AS I AM CERTAIN YOU KNOW, A PROPOSED OFFICIAL CONTACT WITH A HIGH RANKING AMERICAN IS A SENSITIVE INTERNAL POLITICAL ISSUE IN IRAQ AND WE RUN A RISK OF ANGERING THE IRAQIS WHEN WE DISCUSS SUCH CONTACTS WITH OTHER ARAB STATES BEFORE THE IRAQIS DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT THEY DARE TO ACCEPT OUR OFFER.
3. IN FUTURE, I RECOMMEND WE NOT DISCUSS IN ADVANCE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR HIGH LEVEL USG-IRAQI CONTACTS EXCEPT POSSIBLY WITH EGYPTIANS WHOSE AMBASSADOR IN BAGHDAD, UNLIKE MOST OTHER ARAB AMBASSADORS HERE, IS A DISCRETE PROFESSIONAL WHO WOULD PROBABLY AVOID ANGERING IRAQIS BY REVEALING HOW MUCH WE HAVE TOLD EGYPTIANS.

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I HAVE LESS CONFIDENCE IN THE SYRIANS AND ALGERIANS AND RECOMMEND THAT THEY BE KEPT GENERALLY INFORMED OF OUR INTEREST IN IMPROVING RELATIONS AND OUR EFFORTS TO DO SO BUT WITHOUT SEPCIFICS ON TIME, PLACE, AND PERSONALITIES INVOLVED IN PROPOSED CONTACTS.

4. AS FOR THE OTHER ARAB STATES, I BELIEVE WE COULD USEFULLY ASK MOST OF THEM TO CONVEY TO IRAQIS OUR INTEREST IN IMPROVED RELATIONS

ALONG WITH THE REASONS WHY SUCH IMPROVEMENT WOULD ALSO BE IN IRAQ'S INTERESTS. SUCH REPRESENTATIONS WOULD NOT BE THREATENING TO IRAQIS AND MIGHT CARRY SOME WEIGHT BUT IF THE IRAQIS LEARN THAT WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING WITH OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS OUR PROPOSED SPECIFIC PLANS FOR HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS, THEY WILL BE BOTH ANGRY AND FRIGHTENED.
WILEY

SECRET

NNN

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